

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 223974

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, AC, BB

SUBJECT: MILITARY FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS

SUMMARY: WE HAVE TOLD BARBADIAN AMBASSADOR JACKMAN THAT THE
BARBADOS NAVFAC IS MARGINAL TO US SECURITY NEEDS AND WOULD
BE CLOSED IF GOB DEMANDS CONTINUED TO BE UNREASONABLE.
ANTIGUAN FINANCE MINISTER HARRIS WAS TOLD THAT DOD WAS NOT
IN A POSITION TO "FORGIVE" AN EXIM LOAN OF US \$4.5 MILLION
AS HE HAD REQUESTED. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING A COURTESY CALL BY AMBASSADOR JACKMAN ON
ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN SEPTEMBER 13, TODMAN MADE THE
POINT REPEATEDLY THAT THE BARBADOS NAVFAC WAS MARGINAL TO
US SECURITY NEEDS, AND WOULD IN FACT BE CLOSED IF THE GOB
DEMANDS CONTINUED TO BE SO EXTREMELY FAR FROM THE MINIMAL
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VALUE OF THE FACILITY TO US. IN AN ASIDE, HE INDICATED
THAT WE WOULD AT SOME POINT GIVE THEM A FINAL, ABSOLUTE
MAXIMUM OFFER, BUT WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE IF THIS WERE NOT
ACCEPTABLE. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE US HAS NO RETROACTIVE
RENTAL OBLIGATIONS SINCE THE 1961 AGREEMENT SPECIFICALLY
PROVIDED FOR RENT-FREE USE OF THE FACILITY.

2. STATE AND DOD REPS MET WITH ANTIGUAN FINANCE MINISTER
RUBEN HARRIS AND ATTORNEYS WASHINGTON AND LEVINE SEPTEMBER

15. WASHINGTON HAD SAID EARLIER THAT HIS RESEARCH INDICATED THAT DOD MIGHT BE ABLE TO "FORGIVE, THE \$4.5 MILLION HARBOR LOAN MADE BY EXIM, SINCE THE MONEY WAS ORIGINALLY DOD'S. WASHINGTON SAID THE FORGIVENESS WOULD "TAKE CARE OF" GOA CONCERNS ABOUT "UNFULFILLED OBLIGATIONS" FROM THE 1961 TREATY. HARRIS SAID "FORGIVENESS WOULD ENABLE THE GOA TO REFINANCE THE REST OF THE LOAN AND REGAIN THEIR ELIGIBILITY FOR EXIM LOANS. HE SAID THE GOA WAS NOT LINKING "FORGIVENESS" TO GOA SIGNATURE ON THE MILITARY FACILITIES AGREEMENT. (COMMENT: THE INSISTENT PRESSURE BY WASHINGTON BEFORE THE MEETING ACTUALLY SUGGESTED SUCH A LINKAGE. END COMMENT.)

3. THE US REPS POINTED OUT THAT THE US HAD MET ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE 1961 TREATY. THEY SAID THE CURRENT US OFFER WAS BASED ON COMPENSATION FOR FUTURE USE AND REFLECTED THE ACTUAL VALUE OF THE FACILITIES TO US. THE REPS SAID FLATLY THAT DOD WAS IN NO POSITION TO "FORGIVE" THE HARBOR LOAN, SINCE THERE WAS NO WAY TO DO SO WITHOUT INCREASING DOD'S COST FOR THE FACILITIES BY \$4.5 MILLION.

4. FOR AMBASSADOR ORTIZ: YOU SHOULD RAISE THE SUBJECT OF HARRIS' INFORMAL REQUEST FOR "FORGIVENESS" OF THE EXIM
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LOAN IN YOUR MEETING WITH PREMIER BIRD ON MONDAY, MAKING IT CLEAR THAT THE US IS IN NO POSITION TO GRANT SUCH "FORGIVENESS". YOU SHOULD ATTEMPT TO SOUND OUT THE GOA'S CURRENT EXPECTATIONS AND INFORM PREMIER BIRD THAT THE US DELEGATION IS PREPARED TO VISIT ANTIGUA WHENEVER THE GOA DESIRES FINAL NEGOTIATIONS BASED ON OUR PRESENT OFFER. HOWEVER, YOU SHOULD NOT, REPEAT NOT, INDICATE THAT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO RAISE THE ANNUAL RENT PAYMENT ABOVE \$1.3 MILLION. (FYI: HARRIS PLANS TO STAY IN NEW YORK SEPTEMBER 17 TO 25, AND MAY NOT HAVE TOLD THE GOA OF THE SEPTEMBER 15 MEETING. END FYI.)

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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